

Contra Costa County Historical Society

BULLETIN

POST OFFICE BOX 190

MARCH 1976

MARTINEZ, CALIFORNIA



An artist's conception of how Anza, Father Font and Lt. Moraga may have viewed the central area of Contra Costa County in 1776.

Members of the Contra Costa County Historical Society will hear a narration of the Anza Expedition through the county 200 years ago, and current plans to reenact the march, day by day, exactly two centuries later. Co-hosting the all-membership set for March 24th, are the several clubs in Contra Costa affiliated with the California State Horsemen's Assn.

The meeting was called by the Board of Directors in honor of the Anza Reenactment Expedition being staged by the County Bicentennial Committee in cooperation with local civic and bicentennial groups.

Brother Dennis, chief librarian of St. Mary's College, Moraga and a well-known local historian, will be the principal speaker for the evening. He will show a selection of color slides which depict the history and purpose of the Anza Expedition and relate its significance to California history. George Cardinet, prominent horseman and resident of

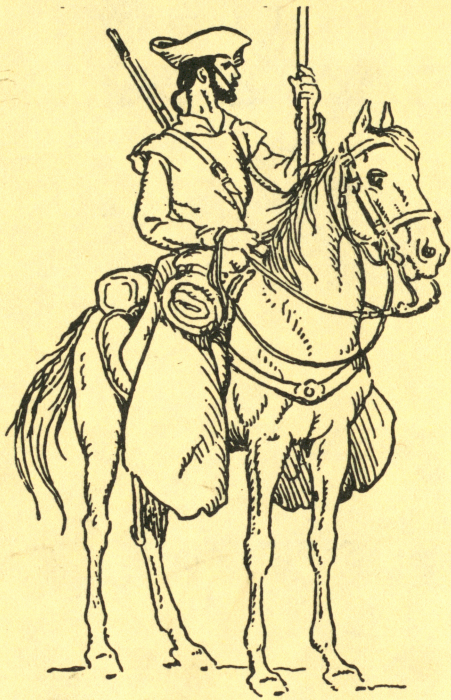
Clayton, will present a brief slide show on the ceremonial start of the Reenactment Expedition in Mexico City last summer.

The Society's Presidential Guests for the evening will be Bert E. Hill and Mrs. Hill. Mr. Hill is the Bicentennial Committee's equestrian chairman and current president of the California State Horsemen's Assn.

Communities participating in the 4-day Reenactment Expedition include El Cerrito, San Pablo, Rodeo-Crocket, Martinez, Concord, Pittsburg, Antioch, Brentwood and Knightsen. The event commences in this county April 1st, at El Cerrito Plaza.

The meeting will be held at the Red

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The Spanish soldier of Anza's time wore a 9-layer leather jacket, an leather botas (leggings). He carried a long spear and rifle.

Rooster Restaurant, Walnut Creek, at 7:30 p.m., preceded by a no-host bibation at 7 p.m.

The expedition of 1776 was not the first in California for Juan Bautista de Anza. Two years before, he made a 6-month scouting journey and opened a passable route between Sonora, Mexico, and the Pacific Coast.

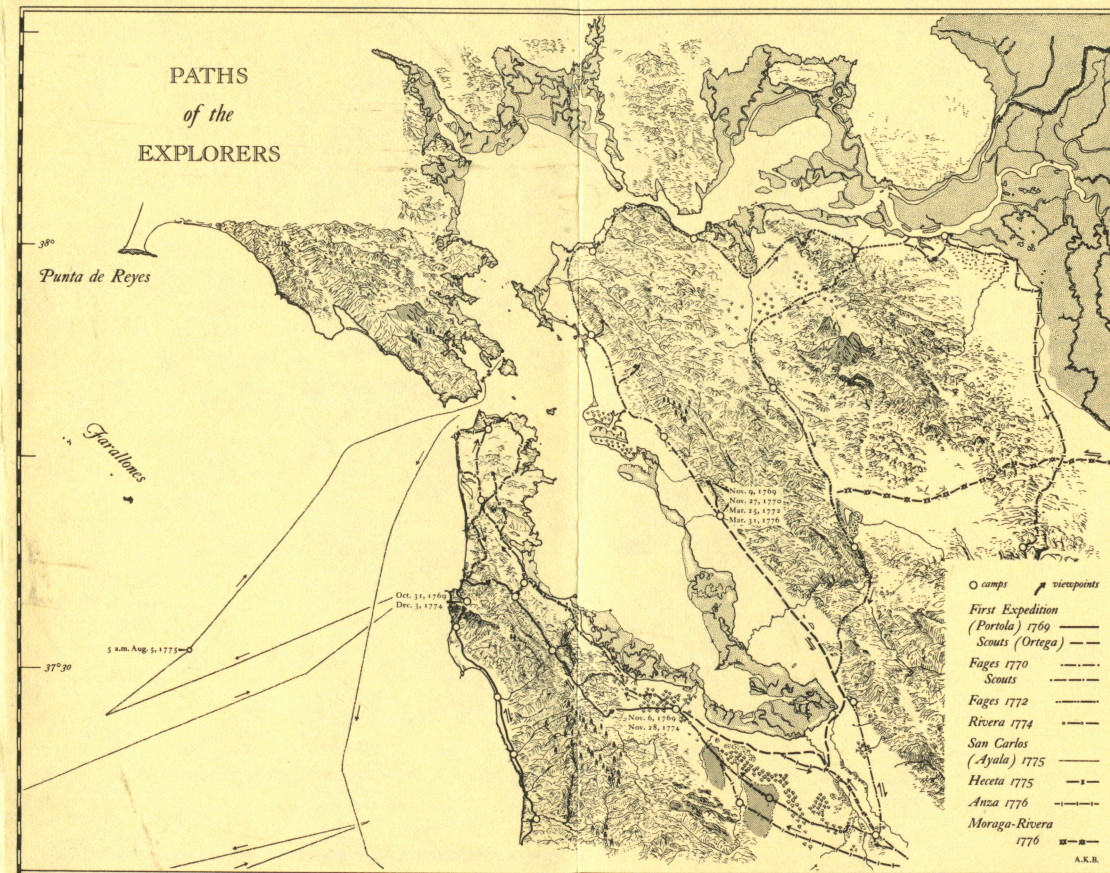
When he returned he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and given permission to lead an expedition of colonists to establish a settlement on San Francisco Bay. He gathered settlers and soldiers from Sinaloa and Sonora, and brought them to the Mexican presidio at Tubac (about 30 miles north of Nogales). There, on October 15, 1774, they started their historic journey of sacrifice, dedication and hardship.

The expedition consisted of 240 persons, led by Anza, Lieutenant Jose Joaquin Moraga, and a Franciscan priest, Fray Pedro Font, who was chaplain and diarist. Accompanying the colonists were 1,000 animals. Several persons died along the route. Many cattle succumbed from lack of water. Three babies were born as the expedition trudged over the sun-bleached rocks and sand of the Arizona-California desert.

Anza brought this party to the Presidio of Monterey on March 10. He was very ill for a few days and Father Junipero Serra cared for him at the Carmel Mission. Before he had fully recovered, he, Moraga, Font, 11 soldiers, servants and animal handlers — 20 in all — left the colonists behind to reconnoiter the San Francisco Bay for suitable sites for a mission and presidio.

It was this smaller group which made the historic exploration of the East Bay and Contra Costa. All members were mounted and on April 1st they crossed the present-day county boundary, near the site of what is now the El Cerrito Plaza. They proceeded northward to the Carquinez Strait, thence east to Antioch and south again to Livermore, on April 4th.

A reprint of the Font diary segment dealing with the East Bay will be reprinted by the Bicentennial Committee for publication during the Reenactment Expedition. It has been prepared under the guidance of Brother Dennis, the Bicentennial Committee's consultant historian.



Map of explorers of Bay Area. Anza's Expedition of 1776 followed Fages' East Bay route to Antioch, then turned south along the eastern foot of Mt. Diablo.

GUEST SPEAKER

Brother Dennis, chief librarian at St. Mary's College, is well known to many historians of Contra Costa County for his interests in local history. His special area of interest is the history of the Moraga area and Moraga family, and it seems quite appropriate that he should be a charter member of the Moraga Historical Society. He serves as that society's archivist.

It also seems appropriate that he is St. Mary's librarian. He graduated from the same school (major: history, of course) in 1936. He did graduate work at the University of California and the Catholic University of America.

For 18 years Brother Dennis taught in secondary schools before taking up his library post at St. Mary's in 1953.





Captain Juan Bautista de Anza who did the historic exploration of the East Bay in 1776. The 1976 reenactment of his journey will closely follow the original route.

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MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DINNER & PROGRAM

Speaker: Brother Dennis,
St. Mary's College
George Cardinet
Clayton

Date: March 24, 1976

Place: Red Rooster Restaurant
2995 Ygnacio Valley Blvd.
Walnut Creek

Time: 7:00 p.m., no-host cocktails
7:30 p.m., dinner, \$7.00

Reservations: To: J.B. Jory, Secretary
P.O. Box 190
Martinez, CA 94553

COME ONE! COME ALL!